

# AFAF helps people in need

By Becky Papp  
"Jet 48" correspondent

The unpredictable life of the Air Force family sometimes means unexpected emergencies. To help families cope with emergencies and meet unique needs, the Air Force Assistance Fund was established.

The AFAF has an annual campaign to raise funds for the charitable organizations that provide support to the Air Force family. These organizations include the Air Force Enlisted Men's Widows and Dependents Home Foundation, Air Force Village Foundation, General and Mrs. Curtis LeMay Foundation and, a little closer to home, the Air Force Aid Society. Last year, the AFAS provided \$127,971 in no-interest loans and \$19,620 in grants to the RAF Lakenheath community.

The AFAF provides an opportunity for the Air Force to take care of its own. At least 95 cents of every dollar contributed directly helps Air Force members and their families.

While the Air Force Enlisted Men's Widows and Dependents Home Foundation, Air Force Village and The LeMay Foundation all provide for elderly dependents, widows and widowers of Air Force members, the Air Force Aid Society has broader scope.

As the official charity for the Air Force, the AFAS was established in 1942 as a non-profit organization. AFAS does not receive any taxpayer support and relies heavily on personal contributions. To support the mission of the Air Force, AFAS strives to relieve the distress of Air Force members and their families and assist in financial aspects of their education.

Hugh Henry-Pierre has been the Air Force Aid Society officer at Lakenheath since October 1994. In that time, he has been involved in helping people in many different emergency situations as well as participating in the distribution of funds for the spouse tuition assistance program.

Henry-Pierre has cases on his desk ranging from an enlisted member who cannot afford to travel state-side to attend the funeral of a close relative, to a family who found themselves victims of burst water pipes who have few belongings



left and no place to live. Every case is individual and the AFAS does not limit the definition of "emergency" to particular situations. AFAS is in the business of meeting emergency needs, what, ever category they fall into, according to Henry-Pierre.

"I couldn't just put together a package and leave it up at the front desk for people to just fill out a claim," explains Henry-Pierre. "If I just gave out applications, I would miss valuable interviews with people that could help me to determine underlying problems."

Often, people are referred by their commander or first sergeant to AFAS, just as SSgt. Francis Cantwell was when his daughter, Lisa, was diagnosed with leukemia.

"You have to be sensitive to people's feelings as well as their needs," said Henry-Pierre. "Difficult circumstances often bring people to AFAS and every case is treated individually and confidentially."

Financial emergencies might point to a personal budgeting problem that could be counseled by the personal finances manager at the family support center, where the AFAS office is located. Other emergencies might be prevented in the future by working with one of the other programs available such as family life education, relocation assistance or career focus. Henry-Pierre emphasizes that there are no required classes or any reciprocity for assistance from AFAS. Air Force Aid works hand-in-hand with the programs offered by the family support center.

"We don't want to just offer band-aids to the families we help," adds Henry-Pierre. "We want to solve people's problems at the root level if possible."

Another one of the countless ways that the AFAS touches the Lakenheath community is through education. Two programs assist Air Force families with education costs, the General Henry H. Arnold Education Grant Program and the General George S. Brown Spouse Tuition Assistance Program.

The Arnold education grant program awards \$1,000 grants to sons and daughters of active-duty, retired and deceased Air Force members. Students complete a grant application and are selected based on eligibility.

The spouse tuition assistance program assists overseas spouses with educational costs. In 1996, the AFAS office at Lakenheath provided \$88,800 in spouse tuition assistance. This money is all in grants and does not have to be repaid.

From vehicle repairs to respite care, the AFAS and the AFAF provide the opportunity for Air Force members to care for themselves.

"We make sure the mission of the Air Force continues by supporting people who are part of that mission," explains Henry-Pierre.

For more information about contributing to the AFAF, contact your unit representative or call 2nd Lt. Evan Pitts at Ext. 5636.

## AFAF Unit Project Officers

### 48th Medical Group

48th Aerospace Medicine Squadron  
48th Medical Support Squadron  
48th Dental Squadron  
48th Medical Operations Squadron

### 48th Support Group

48th Security Police Squadron  
48th Mission Support Squadron,  
48th Civil Engineer Squadron  
48th Communications Squadron  
48th Services Squadron

### 48th Operations Group

48th Operations Support Squadron  
492nd Fighter Squadron  
493rd Fighter Squadron  
494th Fighter Squadron

### 48th Logistics Group

48th Logistics Support Squadron  
48th Component Repair Squadron  
48th Equipment Maintenance Squadron  
48th Transportation Squadron  
48th Supply Squadron  
48th Contracting Squadron

### Other units

Training Detachment 16  
18th Intelligence Squadron  
5th Space Surveillance Squadron

A1C Tamara Mike, Ext. 3806  
MSgt. Scott Giordano, Ext. 5904  
Capt. Benjamin Wright, Ext. 3120  
Capt. Pamela Griffin, Ext. 6405

1st Lt. Patrick Floyd, Ext. 3656  
SSgt. Delfina Chavarria, Ext. 2671  
2nd Lt. Tammy Laird, Ext. 2208  
MSgt. Robert Murphy, Ext. 3621  
Capt. Sunshine Knutson, Ext. 3690

MSgt. Alvin Hill, Ext. 2168  
MSgt. Gerald Majzner, Ext. 2128  
SSgt. John Morris, Ext. 5511  
MSgt. Mike Stossel, Ext. 6152

TSgt. Nathan Oakes, Ext. 1473  
MSgt. Scott Shelton, Ext. 3132  
MSgt. Ray Vaughn, Ext. 3828  
TSgt. David Faris, Ext. 3437  
TSgt. Rodney Benberry, Ext. 5506  
SSgt. Tim Johnson, Ext. 7083

TSgt. Emmanuel Alvertos, Ext. 3424  
SSgt. Mark Busch, Ext. 7043  
SrA. Ramone Young, Ext. 7048